

Options' spacious meeting room is available
to rent for community events, retreats or other gatherings.

For details, call 476-2373

**** Inspiring Hope While Supporting Participation in the Community ****

Your partnership is needed

Yes, here is my contribution: \$25 \$50 \$100 or even more _____\$

**OR: Please send me an invoice once per month for \$_____ each month for a period of one year
as my response to the reduction in state funds for the disabled.**

Name: _____

Address: _____

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Thank You for your generous donation!

All contributions are tax deductible as allowed under IRS guidelines. To assure proper credit, please return this form with your gift.

Mail with your tax deductible check to: **Options for Southern Oregon, 1215 SW G Street, Grants Pass, OR 97526**

OUR MISSION: OPTIONS FOR SOUTHERN OREGON offers consultation, training and innovative programs to serve low income individuals and people with psychiatric disabilities to inspire hope while supporting their participation as respected members of the community.

OPTIONS RECOVERY HOMES BRINGS HOPE TO DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

Options Recovery Homes consist of two transitional houses located in Grants Pass. The program combines clean and sober housing with support to help men and women achieve self-sufficiency upon re-entry from the justice system.

The houses were begun in this community by LAMP, Inc. in 1997. The leadership of LAMP recognized that a person cannot be successful without the basic necessities of life and they wanted to provide a local opportunity for sober housing to help people rebuild their lives. When the economy of scale in operating only two houses became too difficult for the LAMP to continue, Options took over the project.

Rick Jones, Director of Choices, who formerly served as the LAMP Board President, was invaluable in the transition period. Rick stated that these houses are a needed community resource and "they provide the structure, stability, fellowship and accountability necessary to go through treatment and recovery." Casey Black with the Oregon Department of Justice and another LAMP board member, recognizing the importance of the housing, said "I have joy knowing that the work is being done and that Options has a heart for the same mission that we had."

Whereas emergency shelters offer someone in crisis a place to stay for a limited period, often up to three weeks, transitional housing offers something much more stable and structured for an individual in need of housing. "The goal of transitional housing programs is to reduce and eventually eliminate homelessness by giving individuals support and time to put their lives back together." said Jim Bryson, Options Residential Coordinator.

Residents can stay up to six months in the houses. The A Street House can accommodate up to 15 men at a time and Freedom House provides a safe place for 8 women and children. During the last ten months these houses served 56 people.

In January, the Josephine County Affordable Housing Alliance, a coalition of organizations that address homeless issues, held a One-Night Shelter Count which identified 201 homeless persons, 66 more than one year earlier.

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Freedom House Renovated by Volunteer Community Partners

Recently, Options staff asked Dwight Faszer of Dwight Faszer Construction to inspect the basement of Freedom House because of some health and safety concerns. After Dwight saw the basement that had been converted into two tenant rooms, he grew quiet. After a lunch with his wife, Lana, an Options board member for the past several years, he stopped in to chat with Options Executive Director, Kim Miller. Dwight explained that the house needed a great deal of work. He then made an astounding proposal; he offered to take on the entire job at no charge to the agency. He also offered to approach other professionals in the building trades for assistance and several of his suppliers for needed furnishings.

The house was actually in worse shape than even Dwight had assumed. By the time it was completed, at a value of more than \$18,000, it had become the single largest in-kind donation in Options history. Dwight and his crew, with the help of several local partners, renovated the entire basement, installed a new window, drywall, and flooring and replaced a hot water heater, counters, doors, carpets and a brand new range and exhaust fan. Options wants to gratefully acknowledge the following local businesses for their generosity and invaluable assistance: Cliff's Custom Floors, Diamond Home Improvement, Dwight Faszer, Lippert's Carpet One and Bill Bailey, Lee's Quality Doors, Mitch and Carla, Murphy Plumbing, Nutting Drywall, Patino's Appliance, Quality Countertops, and The Power Company. Their gifts will continue to benefit residents for years to come.

Options' Board of Directors

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ORH Brings Hope...

When people are ready to move out, ORH Residential Coordinator Monica Wickham said the goal is that they'll be able to keep a stable job and obtain permanent housing. Overall she hopes that, "people who go through the program will be ready to take their place in society and stand up and be counted."

Wickham encourages residents during the job search and helps connect them to community resources. She gives them second and sometimes third chances as they learn the ropes of re-entry. She said the most important things for a new person to bring to the house are open-mindedness and a willingness to take a look at yourself.

The houses are run on a system of honor, trust, and respect. "Peer support" is the term used to describe the feedback and constructive criticism that is present among housemates. All of the residents go to recovery support meetings, at least three per month, and find a sponsor or mentor to help them through the reintegration process.

Learning to Live Again

Life is not easy when moving into the transitional houses. It requires a big lifestyle change which is tough for people whose struggle has rendered them homeless and in prison in the first place. There is a great deal of social stigma associated with being a felon and an addict. As new people come to ORH, they often have no transportation, no medical care, no clothing or a place to live. Most of the residents, ranging in age from 20 to 56, have a history of substance abuse and a variety of criminal activity.

The Probation Department will loan new tenants their first month's rent but they need to find work within that time to continue their residence. Initially new residents have a 30 day blackout period, which requires a strict accounting of their whereabouts. The houses maintain a zero tolerance for drug and alcohol use and residents must enroll in substance abuse treatment. Random drug testing is also required. Curfew is 11 p.m. on weekdays and midnight on weekends. Nights away require permission from staff. Each resident has daily chores.

The structure can sometime cause friction among the housemates. Interpersonal issues that come up are addressed and resolved at weekly "house meetings."

Continued next column

Since last September, Bryson and Wickham have worked with the justice system and treatment providers to ensure that the houses run smoothly. Three men were asked to leave and three others left voluntarily because they were either unwilling or unable to follow the rules. But, if the participants can live by the rules, they usually succeed.

Hope Begins

For several days last winter, Clay, 28, felt he had nowhere to go. Drugs had derailed his life; he had ended up incarcerated, and now he was homeless.

It was humiliating, he said. He felt as though he had alienated himself from his friends, family, and community. While incarcerated, a time he calls his absolute lowest, he began to think about truly changing his life.

Misty, 27, had hit an icy patch in the road, addicted to drugs and incarcerated, she felt a glimmer of hope when she got the call about moving into the Freedom House upon release, after a referral from Drug Court.

Both Clayton and Misty have gone through the program at Options Recovery Homes. Six months later, they have stabilized their situation by going through recovery, finding work, and committing to the full-time care of their children. Clay and Misty have truly turned a corner in their life and they are ready to move into their own home with their children.

Continued next page

OPTIONS is seeking donations to assist new people moving into the Recovery Homes.

ESPECIALLY

Donations to create Welcome Kits consisting of Bath Towels, Washcloths, Single Sheets & Pillowcases and Personal Care Items like Toothbrushes, Toothpaste, Soap, Shampoo, Mouthwash, Disposable Razors, etc.

Dressers, Bureaus, and Night Stands

ORH Brings Hope...

Misty and Clay have three little boys, aged 2, 4, and 5. Misty was in MOMS program while incarcerated and began taking the first steps towards recovery. She then worked with Family Friends, along with her husband, to complete custody arrangements for their children.

"The ability this house gave me to start taking steps forward in my life was so important," Clay said. He now works in a good job in the construction trade with a generous employer. He has been able to save enough money to get his driver's license back and both he and Misty have overcome tremendous barriers to be where they are. Clay added, "the program's structure is great because it has allowed me to spend time with clean and sober friends and develop healthy relationships."

Misty, said the stability of the Freedom House anchored her during a rough time. The Women's House gives women the opportunity, many for the first time in their life, to stop, and work on healing themselves and not just focusing on life as a wife or a mother. According to Misty, "the Freedom House was one of the safest and most comfortable places I could be, a place to form bonds and heal myself."

It was not so long ago that Clay and Misty were sleeping in prison cells. They feel now like they have nowhere to go but up. As Clay says, "All my prayers have been answered and being faithful to this commitment has changed my life, I'm now able to live in the here & now."

New Contracts and Funding

Case Management for Homeless Adults

Options is pleased to announce that we will be working with Josephine County Mental Health to implement the SAMHSA funded "Bridges to Success" project here in the county. This 5 year grant will expand the capacity to provide strengths case management for 155 homeless persons with substance use disorders, serious mental illness, or co-occurring disorders. Three new case managers will provide outreach, engagement, strengths assessment, goal setting, action planning, and resource acquisition assistance for eligible homeless persons throughout the county. The project is based on consumer self-determination and accessing natural community resources while focusing on individual strengths. In addition to the county and Options, ADAPT, Choices and The Union will be partnering to provide the services.

2005 FESTIVAL OF TREES

The 2005 FESTIVAL OF TREES planning is in full swing. Several Options board and staff members have joined the Steering Committee to help produce the festival. Our thanks to Ralph Trigg, John Sawyer, Lana Faszer, Denise Olson, Pat Wedman, Zoe Anne Northcutt, Joe Serres and of course the intrepid Kim Miller for the time and dedication they are giving to this important fund raising and community awareness effort.

This year's Festival proceeds will be dedicated to the Employment Works program, which provides individual job development and ongoing support to consumers of mental health services. In addition to the live and silent auctions, there are some exciting raffles this year, including a complete holiday dining room package, a 6 X 8 foot Mini Barn, and a "Raffle Tree" filled with lots of great merchandise and certificates from Oregon retailers. More tree sponsors and auction donors are still needed to help us reach our fund raising goals, so if you have something you'd like to contribute, please contact Julie Rubenstein at 441-9730. Sponsoring a tree is an easy way to participate visibly in the heart of the festival, with the bonus of generating even more dollars for Options when it is sold.

VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED. *If you enjoyed pitching in to help last year, or wish you had, now is your chance to come down and lend your talent or labors to the many volunteer jobs that make this a successful event.*

A meeting for volunteers and tree designers will be held in the Options meeting room at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, August 30th.

To volunteer or for more information, please call Ellen Garton at 471-0317, or festval@optionsonline.org.

OPTIONS COMMUNITY GARDEN

POTLUCK/WORK PARTY!

**Friday, September 16,
3-6 p.m.**

Please join us for a late summer potluck and work party in the Options Community Garden!

Contact Joe Serres at 476-2373 x125
for more information.